

SEARCH

SEARCH

ABOUT

BY YEAR

BY THEME

► [Home](#) » [1917](#) » [Conflict with the Church](#) » [Conflict with the Church Texts](#) » Patriarch Anathematizes the Bolsheviks

PATRIARCH ANATHEMATIZES THE BOLSHEVIKS

PATRIARCH TIKHON, A PASTORAL LETTER. FEBRUARY 1, 1918

Original Source: A. I. Vvedenskii, Tserkov' i gosudarstvo: Ocherk vzaimootnoshenii tserkvi i gosudarstva v Rossii 1918-1922 g. (Moscow, 1923).

THE HUMBLE TIKHON, by the Grace of God Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia,

To all God's beloved, prelates, priests, and all faithful children of the Orthodox Russian Church.

"He might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. 1: 4.)

The Holy Orthodox Christian Church is passing through a period of stress. The open and concealed enemies of the truth of Christ have started to persecute that truth and are aiming a mortal blow at the cause of Christ. In place of Christian love they are sowing seeds of malice, envy, and fratricidal war.

Christ's precept to love our neighbor is forgotten and trampled under foot. Every day we learn that innocent people, not excluding those lying sick in bed, are being frightfully and brutally murdered for the sole offense that they have honestly discharged their duty to the country and have devoted all their energies to serve the welfare of the people. These crimes are committed ... in broad daylight with unprecedented effrontery and outrageous brutality ... in almost every city of our native land ...

These crimes fill our heart with deep sorrow and compel us to denounce sharply these monsters of the human race ... in accordance with the precept of the Holy Apostle: "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear." (I Tim. 5: 20.)

Think what you are doing, you madmen! Stop your bloody reprisals. Your acts are not merely cruel, they are the works of Satan for which you will burn in Hell fire in the life hereafter and be cursed by future generations in this life.

By the authority given me by God I forbid you to partake of the Christian Mysteries. I anathematize you if you still bear a Christian name and belong by birth to the Orthodox Church.

And you, faithful children of the Orthodox Christian Church, I beseech you to have nothing to do with this scourge of the human race: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." (I Corinthians 5: 13.)

Violent outrages are being committed against the Orthodox Christian Church. The blessed mysteries, which sanctify the birth of man or the union of husband and wife in a Christian family, are openly declared unnecessary and superfluous. Holy Churches are being destroyed by gunfire (churches of the Moscow Kremlin) or looted and desecrated (the chapel of Our Savior in Petrograd); monasteries most revered by the faithful, such as Aleksandro-Nevskaia and Pochaevskaia Lavras, have been seized by the godless rulers of darkness under the pretext that they are the people's property. Schools maintained by the Orthodox Church for the training of ministers and religious teachers have been declared useless and turned either into schools of atheism or into nurseries of immorality.

Church and monastery properties are being confiscated under the pretext that they are the property of the people, but the legitimate will of the people is never taken into consideration. And, finally, the government which promised to give Russia justice and truth and safeguard freedom and order acts everywhere and toward everyone, including the Holy Orthodox Church, with unrestrained arbitrariness and violence..

Is there no limit to this insolence ... ? Is there no way of stopping the aggressiveness of the enemies of the Christian Church ?

I summon you, faithful and loyal children of the Church. Come to the defense of your outraged and oppressed Holy Mother! ... I summon you, beloved children of the Church, even if you should have to suffer for the cause of Christ, ... for the Apostle has said: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8: 35.)

And you, fellow prelates and priests, sound the call ... for the defense of ... the Orthodox Church, without an hour's delay. Organize unions of crusaders of the spirit ... who can resist external force with the zeal of

the faithful, and I firmly believe that the enemies of the Church ... will be vanquished by the Cross of Christ, because the edifice of the Divine Crusader cannot be demolished: " ... I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16: 18.)

TIKHON

The Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, ed., Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918; Documents and Materials (Stanford: Stanford University Press; H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 587-589.

Post

1917



EVENTS

[February Revolution](#)

[Formation of the Soviets](#)

[April Crisis](#)

[Revolution in the Army](#)

[July Days](#)

[Kornilov Affair](#)

[Bolsheviks Seize Power](#)

[First Bolshevik Decrees](#)

[Constituent Assembly](#)

[Treaty of Brest Litovsk](#)

FOUR KINDS OF STATES

[Communist Party Building](#)

[Economic Apparatus](#)

[Building the Soviets](#)

[Red Guard into Army](#)

[State Security](#)

DISINTEGRATION OF THE OLD SOCIETY

Depopulation of the Cities

Food Supply

Conflict with the Church

Death of the Old Culture

Destruction of the Left

The Empire Falls

CREATION OF A NEW SOCIETY

New Letters and Dates

Culture and Revolution

The New Woman

Workers Organization

Peasant Revolution

Organs of the Press

Raising Socialist Youth

MACALESTER COLLEGE



POWERED BY [PARABOLA](#) & [WORDPRESS](#).